

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application in view of the present amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

This amendment amends claims 14 and 18 and cancels 20 and 21. Claims 14 and 18, which were indicated as being allowable, have been rewritten in independent form. Thus, allowance of claims 14 and 18 is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected claim 13 as being obvious. Claim 13 depends from allowed claim 24 and is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 24. Therefore, allowance of claim 13 is respectfully requested.

Independent claims 11 and 27 and dependent claim 26 stand rejected as being obvious over Graham et al. in view of Pazdirek et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,609,433. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 11 patentably defines over Graham et al. and Pazdirek et al., whether taken singularly or in combination, for at least the following reasons:

1 Neither Graham et al. nor Pazdirek et al. teaches a metal ring that secures a bearing shell within a plastic joint housing by the metal ring having:

- a. Plastic of the joint housing on only one side of a cylindrical center portion of the metal ring; and
- b. A radially outwardly angled flange that is embedded in the plastic joint housing.

Claim 11 recites that the metal ring includes a radially outwardly angled flange that is embedded in the joint housing,

a radially inwardly bent end segment located in an area of an opening in the joint housing, and a cylindrical center part having an inside diameter that corresponds to an outside diameter of the bearing shell. As a result, the plastic of the joint housing in claim 11 is located on the outside surface of the center part of the metal ring. As a result, less plastic may be required for forming the joint housing of claim 11 than is required for forming the joint housing of Pazdirek et al. in which plastic flows through holes 30 in the ball cap 36 and is located on both sides of the ball cap.

Moreover, in the ball-and-socket joint of claim 11, the embedment of the radially outwardly angled flange of the metal ring in the plastic housing acts to fix the metal ring in the plastic joint housing so that the metal ring may act to secure the bearing shell. Neither Graham et al. nor Pazdirek et al. teaches or suggests such structure. In Graham et al., the smaller diameter bore 10c and the crimped portions 10f act to fix the casing 12 in the metal joint housing. In Pazdirek et al., the molding of plastic through the holes 30 in the ball cap 36 fixes the ball cap 36 in the plastic housing. Since neither Graham et al. nor Pazdirek et al. teaches or suggests these features of claim 11, a combination of the references also fails to teach or suggest these features. Therefore, allowance of claim 11 is respectfully requested.

2. There is no suggestion or motivation for forming the joint housing of Graham et al. from plastic.

Graham et al. teaches providing a wear-free housing that is adapted to receive replacable insert units 11. Graham et

al. teaches that the housing should outlast a number of such insert units. (Graham et al., Col. 1, line 55-Col. 2, line 2). Pazdirek et al. teaches that the plastic housing 12 is insert molded around the major components of the ball joint, including the ball 22, the ball cap 36, and a strengthening element 26. (Pazdirek et al., Col. 4, lines 44-46 and Col. 3, lines 45-47). Neither Graham et al. nor Pazdirek et al. teaches or suggests a plastic joint housing that is adapted to receive replacable insert units. Therefore, there is no suggestion of motivation for forming the joint housing of Graham et al. from plastic. Thus, the rejection of claim 11 is improper and allowance of claim 11 is respectfully requested.

Claim 26 depends from claim 11 and is allowable for at least the same reason as claim 11. Therefore, allowance of claim 26 is respectfully requested.

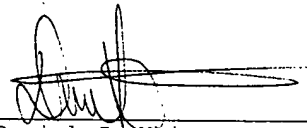
Claim 27 is similar to claim 11 and is patentably defines over Graham et al. and Pazdirek et al. for reasons similar to those set forth above with regard to claim 11. Therefore, allowance of claim 27 is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified patent application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified patent application is respectfully requested.

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Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in
the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account
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Respectfully submitted,



Daniel J. Whitman
Reg. No. 43,987

TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL,
& TUMMINO L.L.P.
526 Superior Avenue, Suite 1111
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1400
Phone: (216) 621-2234
Fax: (216) 621-4072
Customer No.: 26,294